

TIME BOMBS



DISGUISED



AS POEMS



by



PETE WINSLOW



TIME BOMBS  
DISGUISED  
AS POEMS

Foraged from  
the forgotten wordplay  
of  
Pete Winslow

INTELLECTUAL VAGABOND EDITIONS  
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## FORAGER'S INTRODUCTION

Many years ago - I think in 1981 or 1982 - I stole a small book of poetry from City Lights Books in San Francisco. For any moralists reading this, aghast that I would steal from such a place, let me ease your puritan minds (or not). I had barely enough income at the time to cover food and rent. Would you deny those with wild and fertile imaginations their poetry, their free-spirited intellectual stimulation, the mad beauty that lets them see beyond the demands of the economy, the banality of daily life in a work and pay society? Pete Winslow (and any true poet) certainly would not have. When I'm feeling generous, I like to think that when Ferlinghetti came up with the idea of "pocketbook editions" of such poetry, it was so that those without funds could still get poetry without the shame of begging. Most likely, I am being overly generous to Ferlinghetti. Pete Winslow, on the other hand, was a true poet and so an outlaw. He would have understood why, so many decades ago, I had to pocket *A DAISY IN THE MEMORY OF A SHARK*.

I feel that Pete Winslow would have shared the attitude of the late French outlaw and poet, Albertine

Sarrazin: "Everything is my due, but I want to take it for myself"; no begging, no asking permission, regardless of how "poor" you may be.

In any case, the book was a revelation for me. Pete Winslow broke down the doors and smashed the locks that separated dream from waking life, the hidden inner worlds of imagination, with its anarchic refusal of a gray, imposed reality, from the outer world, the banal daily life that this wild imagination would undermine.

Unfortunately, in my vagabond life, I lost this amazing little book. For some reason (perhaps because it was a business and so had every reason to maintain the existing reality), City Lights let this book (by a poet who died - at the young age of 37 - a year before it was published) go out of print while keeping far more banal (though far more profitable) versifiers in print, the sort of crap that pleases "radical" and "alternative" academics with degrees in literature.

For a long time, all I had was my memory of this marvelous book. Then, a few years ago, I found a copy through inter-library loan. I am not sure if it was a complete copy. I photocopied it and found I had the "Foreword" followed by some poems, "Part Two: The

Beer Which Flows From My Hair", and "Part Four: Halting Steps Toward Shore". Pete Winslow, a poet and a surrealist, and so also a trickster, may well have put the book together this way intentionally, but it's also possible that the old, frail copy of the book I found on inter-library loan was missing parts. So what I offer you here are those bits of that book which inspired me so much along a few other poems by Pete Winslow that I've been able to forage. He was a genuine poet and a genuine rebel, and I don't want to see his poetry disappear, buried under the sweethearts of the academic literati. So here for your pleasure, and hopefully to shake you up a bit, is the wordplay of Peter Winslow.

Apio Ludd  
June 2017





PART 1: A DAISY IN THE MEMORY OF  
A SHARK



## FOREWORD

I see him in my future. He has selected my worst poems, from the years when I was most harried and short of poetic breath, and is using them as a pretext for some bland esthetic doctrine. Well, that's all right. Let him drag out poems written before I knew anything: I'm more careful now, that's all. My stories rejected by Playboy: that's all right, I have had the privilege of rejecting Playboy, except for occasional peeks at the photography. There's nothing he can do to hurt me, for I have kept the best poems so low-keyed that the worst are always close to them, and even the worst are not civilized. Those I hope to write are not only apart from civilization, they show the trails leading away so clearly they cannot coexist with it. I leave time bombs around disguised as poems -- even the connoisseur of duds gets his eyes opened once in a while.



The bargain basement opened on a  
meadow of kisses  
Crowds of women handled the flowers  
as if they were stone phalluses  
I reached for forests of intelligence  
but they fell away  
Leaving me a fossil in which my name  
was written  
The loop of the L said everything  
It said to kiss the worm which dragged  
a flower over lava  
A beautiful woman stood in its place  
her hair blown in the wind inside  
a stone  
I touched her gently she was only  
three inches high  
Her tears made my fingers grow until  
my arms ended in distant mountains  
I was the snow the tundra dotted with  
tiny blue daisies the fragrance  
seducing the caribou  
On my white back the exercises of  
breathing leather  
Slowly I swallowed the mammoth and  
the bear woke in the spring beneath  
a glacier  
I called the ocean by its first name  
I became an eon but a billion years  
passed in an instant  
And I never had time to write my poems  
which take the form of erosion  
of the ice cap  
A few icebergs some blue fumes a daisy  
in the memory of a shark

How may I become your clothes when  
    you are so lovely nude  
This is the problem of the moon  
Whose solution is to disappear slowly

It's lovely on the ocean at night  
Nothing holding us up  
Nothing holding us down  
The moon with its bandages ready to  
    comfort the white creatures whose  
        lips are torn by speech  
Whose hair is the seaweed of the heart  
Where the center of the ocean lies in  
    an unmarked grave  
The songs of mermaids tumble out of  
    the surf at midnight  
Along with the torches of drowned  
    incendaries  
And love letters found by children  
    whose parents have forgotten them  
To whom low tide is a place to live  
The letters say we set out in the  
    little boats of our hands

The invisible telephones of the wind  
are ringing  
The sleepy mayor of the stolen town  
dines on a flyspeck  
In an airborne grotto where three-  
legged women are seen dimly through  
the foam  
And candles on the underwater birthday  
cake blaze like highway flares  
Like strange bumps in one's side  
Like the ocean tasting of caramel  
Like the tide taking a bath  
Like silken spinach  
Like the knees of carrots  
O the songs rise from the worm holes  
in my heart into a mist of immobile  
raindrops



Sunspots hibernate upon a cache of  
arrows  
At the spot on the map where there  
is no X  
Where scrolls are fast as hotrods  
And light ricochets from the eye  
A fume seeks its place in the prism  
As the claws of night  
Disappear in wavy blows of music

In the air picketed by hours with  
missing minutes  
Robot mice sprout fronds of imitation  
feathers  
Faucets drip with mercury  
While statues on roller skates stand  
all about  
And the tractor races the bee for  
the trophy of eggshells  
I can only dismantle the motors of  
the cigarette  
Whose cheeks have grown rosy in the  
snow  
The man who shoes the winged horse  
carries magnets inside his skin  
He knows where I am going

PART 2: THE BEER THAT FLOWS FROM  
MY HAIR



The piano is empty the grave is filled  
with music  
The scenery has collapsed the air is  
full of artillery smoke  
Three wounded fish signal madly for  
war to stop  
While sweetness is wrung from fire  
by hands wrapped in the ears  
of elephants  
I am famous for the beer which flows  
from my hair

You are a log cabin in the desert  
You are the Statue of Liberty answering  
a huge stone telephone  
You are hard to kiss with your lips  
of heavy elements  
You are a lion in a fur-lined cage  
You are a canary with acne  
You are a rocking chair carved from  
toenails  
You are a licensed hurricane  
You are licking the wounds of the  
eclipse  
Hello I want my revenge  
You are a deep sea diver wrinkled  
by smoke

for Schlechter Duvall

1

To trample the sun while breasts escape  
from the fissures in your chest  
Is to shoot the arrow tied to your  
foot into the vaginal angel

2

To enter the cavern where the eye  
swims like a hairy fish  
Is to pierce with erectil scissors  
the ribs of the violet

3

To immolate the lark in the third  
hour of trying to tell what time  
it is  
Is to risk the revenge of nostrils  
stuffed with feathers

Shall I ever kiss you  
Or your murderous lips as they go by  
Minnows puckering their earthquakes



The air is damp with waiting  
In the curved headaches of lightning  
bolts  
Lightning is really the incandescence  
of tables with fire in the drawers  
Trout are leaping in the river of  
wind under my pillow  
My pillow over my face  
Its hair turning my mind to feathers

Hold my hand, I am afraid that  
when I am not looking  
the horizon will slide  
under the carpet

--Penelope Rosemont

Hold my hand your fingers  
Have the feel of being lighter than  
air

Shall we fly together  
To where the rainbow smoulders  
The horizon slides in our bed  
The way the sky floats in its  
reflections

We are embers from the prism  
It is much like being radioactive  
They could develop instruments  
To detect us if they dared

A few dim stars are upon me out of  
the candle  
The reflected yesterdays touch one  
another again  
She lies asleep where I lived in my  
imagination  
Some Paris burned down  
The man who holds her is a poet too  
but he writes with the sweat of  
his love  
They are shiny together  
She doesn't recognize me with my  
inhabited moon  
The cities in the heavens sigh  
For burning is heavy work



## PART 4: HALTING STEPS TOWARD SHORE



No one knew just when history turned  
backwards  
But suddenly the flowers from past  
years began to seem familiar  
Then the extinct animals came back  
Dragging their huge tails through  
unemployment lines  
We kept on going of course  
Through the crusades and the wars  
of the roses  
Until we found ourselves with all  
power in our hands  
In a primordial gasball  
Just us and the snake at the cocktail  
party before the debut

Be realistic: demand the  
impossible!  
--slogan, Paris 1968,  
attributed to Jean Duvignaud and  
Michel Leiris

I am of no nationality ever  
contemplated by the chancelleries  
--Aimé Césaire

My brief glimpse of just one star  
Just one stripe  
In the flag which unseen as an old  
woman  
Lies flat on so many windows  
Did not admit me to patriotism  
That room where tickets are collected  
every day and cost nothing

I saw one star clearly for just a  
moment  
White as a virgin's desire  
In a blue field  
Which will turn green no sooner than  
the sky  
It had no politicians in it  
And the girl all in white was black  
as often as not

I saw a long red stripe  
A river of blood  
In which everyone bathed without  
permission  
It will turn green when the only blood



Is in weeds on our graves  
I am of no nationality ever  
    contemplated  
But I have a flag  
One star in a blue field  
And the river of human life  
The living flag of an impossible  
    nation  
Which I intend to demand

I am a man strangling an ocean  
I have found its neck and am banging  
its head against the wall  
It writhes I am kicked by sharks  
Stung by eels and swallowed by huge  
clams no one told me about  
The whole room is wet  
When my wife comes I'll have to explain  
the corpse  
Why I won't surge in my bed for a week  
or two  
And the absence of breakers  
But such things are nothing against  
the threat of salt water  
To this land I have defended in combat  
with mighty ulcers  
And where I contribute to the upkeep  
of an army  
It is little enough to send my  
occupation troops into the protein  
chains  
Saying we have as much right here as  
anyone

The old and new collide every couple  
of billion years  
Striking sparks that set the mind  
racing  
Sparks of feasting on the charred  
flesh of one's comfort  
Sparks of triumphal entry into snow  
castles  
Sparks of delight where the sun shines  
in pyrites  
Sparks of recall in running water  
Sparks of invertebrate pleasure under  
the tires of rolligons  
Sparks of armless athletes swimming  
hilariously through the fallopian  
tubes  
Sparks of the meeting of day and night  
with the cells making love every  
instant  
Sparks of winter clinging to spring  
like flakes of white coal  
Sparks of the elegant horror of a  
chair leg burned away  
Sparks of people speaking the crazy  
thoughts of fish  
Sparks of new fruits the same as the  
old except for the writing inside  
Sparks of speech among flowers  
Sparks of speech among the cells and  
the birth of social institutions  
Sparks of the lathed and sanded hearts  
of the cultivated

Sparks of the broken hearts of the  
    young  
Sparks of the castles wherein dwell  
    the hearts of the old  
Sparks of the non-beating hearts of  
    the hopeless  
Sparks of the fiery hearts of  
    revolutionaries  
Sparks of the hearts of meat of the  
    oppressed  
Sparks of daylight at the end of the  
    sleeve  
Sparks of live coals in the sandwich  
Sparks of virtue strained from the  
    juices of electrocuted criminals  
Sparks of the leftover dreams of the  
    dead  
Sparks of the dreams coming to a boil  
Sparks of the dreams of the sentimental  
    embryo  
Sparks of the dreams of the electronic  
    tube with its expanding eye  
Sparks of the night in which roses  
    glow  
Sparks of the loveless oranges  
Sparks of the person crushed by  
    alternatives  
Sparks of the cluttered sky

## THE ANARCHIST GUIDEBOOK

After you pay your taxes, buy all  
your licenses,  
submit to the draft and spend 40 hours  
at the  
office, you've still got half an hour  
a day for  
anarchy.

Some of the things you can do are  
not read the newspaper  
not buy any advertised product  
jaywalk  
play the accordian badly on street  
corners  
write a subversive children's book  
eat something inedible like treebark  
erasers or dynamite  
go into a supermarket with various  
obscure items and place them on  
the shelves  
paint meat different colors  
organize protest marches at classic  
music stations to demand top 40  
tunes  
and enlist support for all candidates  
who campaign in Uncle Sam costumes.  
After you have more experience with  
anarchy  
you can improvise.

## HURRICANE FRED

A guy came along on a horse  
Shouting into a bullhorn that the  
turtles were coming  
We said so what  
He told us they'd eat the furniture  
Drink the gas from the cars  
Run up the phone bill and keep the  
lights on in the daytime  
Well we battened down the hatches  
And sure enough they came millions  
of them  
Moving in off the freeway  
Eating doorknobs and drinking fuel  
Wanting only to be loved  
We gave them love took them into our  
homes  
Let them eat and drink what they wanted  
Let them sleep with our daughters  
And at last they went back into the  
swamp  
Everyone pitched in to clean up the  
mess  
We scrubbed the turtle poop off of  
everything  
Until the town looked the same as  
before  
Now there's just the children with  
shells on their backs  
To remind us of Hurricane Fred.



Intellectual  
Vagabond



Editions